

Language Arts and Literacy Courses

Ensuring that an appropriately prepared and endorsed teacher is assigned to teach in Michigan's classrooms is critical to student achievement. The State Board of Education (SBE) has [approved standards](#) for preparing teachers in each endorsement area.

The Language Arts (BX) endorsement is a group endorsement, covering English language and literature study, journalism, speech, reading and some communication arts concepts appropriate to grades K-8. The English (BA) endorsed teacher does not have the same breadth of preparation.

The term "English Language Arts (ELA)" in the [Michigan K-12 Standards for English Language Arts](#) and [Michigan Merit Curriculum](#) (MMC) causes some confusion as to which endorsement a teacher should hold for a given assignment, especially when a school has opted to name all its English or Language Arts courses as ELA. When determining the appropriate endorsement needed for a course, reviewing the title alone is not sufficient. Administrators and teachers should also apply and align all the considerations outlined in the [Proper Placement Considerations](#) document before assigning teachers or developing courses.

Most 9-12 ELA courses are truly English courses, with a focus on English language and literature study (e.g. English 11, Literature; see the [Quick Reference: Courses That Can Be Taught](#) for additional BA course titles). For that reason, the State Board of Education eliminated the secondary level Language Arts endorsement in 2000.

See the [Reading Course Assignments](#) document for additional clarification assigning teachers to specific reading courses.

A speech course is designed to help students gain self-confidence in public speaking and master the skills necessary to prepare and present interesting and well organized speeches to an audience. The course will aid in conversation, small group interaction, identification of speaking purposes, supporting ideas, and listening skills. Some of the projects students can expect to produce are informational speeches, persuasive speeches, sales presentations, marketing campaigns, impromptu activities and more. This course should be taught by a

Speech (BD), Language Arts (BX), or Communication Arts (AX) endorsed teacher. The English (BA) endorsed teacher does not have sufficient depth of preparation to teach it.

Please note that the Communication Arts (AX) endorsement is being [discontinued](#) beginning with 2017 summer programs and the 2017-2018 school year. This endorsement is not removed from teaching certificates. School districts are free to assign any teacher to courses specific to this endorsement who provides evidence of professional development and holds a certificate for the grade level at which these courses are offered.

Key Points:

- The English (BA) 6-12 endorsed teacher may teach a true Language Arts course at the 6-8 grade level only.
- English (BA) is the proper credential for courses meeting the 9-12 MMC ELA requirements. A 6-12 Language Arts issued before 2000 when the BX could be either elementary or secondary is also acceptable.
- The English (BA) 6-12 or 6-8 endorsed teacher is **not** prepared to teach reading in isolation, at any grade level between 6-12.
- The Language Arts (BX) K-8 or 6-8 endorsed teacher may teach reading in isolation. However, it should be noted that the Reading Specialist (BR) or Reading (BT) endorsed teacher would have optimum preparation for an isolated reading course.
- If a Language Arts class has instruction in learning to read or in remediating deficits in literacy skills as a major component, then it should be taught by a Reading Specialist (BR), Reading (BT) or Language Arts (BX) endorsed teacher. It should be considered a reading course.
- Even if a class is called Language Arts, if its primary focus is literature and language study, then an English (BA) endorsed teacher may be appropriately placed.
- The English (BA) endorsed teacher is not prepared to teach speech courses.
- The Language Arts (BX) endorsed teacher may teach speech as the BX preparation program does cover this sub-area.
- A language arts course containing both speech and reading as components should be assigned to a teacher holding the Language Arts (BX) endorsement.

Additional guidance documents on the teaching of [yearbook](#) and [school newspaper](#) are also available.